



January 7, 2015

**MAYOR KITTY PIERCY  
2015 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS**

**Expect the Best, Work for the Best and Get the Best!**

Today begins my 11<sup>th</sup> year as Mayor, and I am grateful for the privilege to serve in 2015. It is my hope that this proves to be an excellent year for each and every one of you.

I enjoy the annual State of the City because it is an opportunity to recognize the progress being made, as well as thank councilors and partners, our city manager and talented staff, and the many, many volunteers who give so freely of their time and talents.

I know that lists are lists, but this is how I work. I set goals, make lists and recheck to be sure we get the work done, or change course as required. So, forgive the list you will hear this evening and join me in celebrating what occurred during 2014 and what we look forward to in 2015.

As your Mayor I expect the best, work for the best, and, most of the time, we get the best. In all we do, we work to ensure a strong local economy, social equity and the protection of our natural resources. We work to leave a better city for future generations. We work to have a structurally sound budget and to provide excellent services for the people of our community. We work for our city to lead in an often-difficult world. This is exciting work - work to be proud of.

**In 2014:**

***Fulfilling one more promise***

I want to recognize that although we celebrated the birthday of the city of Eugene in 2012, 2014 was the official sesquicentennial of our first city government, established in 1864 after the vote of the people endorsing incorporation. The first Mayor was J.B. Underwood. The first incorporation was by the legislature, but there was local stir about that incorporation - something about not wanting new laws and taxes. Thus, the first was repealed and the second required an election by the people. In 1864 the City of Eugene charter and government were put in place, and it's been a grand adventure ever since. That's what happened in 1864 and here's what happened in 2014.

***City departments improved services in keeping with our values:***

1. Our downtown continued to revitalize with new commercial investments, new lights, and activities, including game night downtown – a place for everyone to have fun!

2. The Eugene Springfield fire department merger was completed, providing operational efficiencies, millions of dollars in cost savings and the ability to deploy resources in a seamless manner to keep our communities safer.
3. Wastewater celebrated 30 years of protecting our environment and well-being.
4. The airport remodeled its ticket lobby and embarked on a \$17 million terminal expansion as passenger traffic continued at a record pace.
5. Parks and Open Space, with the help of many partners, completed the WJ Skatepark + Urban Plaza - the largest covered skateboard park in the nation, and a wonderful new asset for our young people.
6. Nearly 30 lane-miles of streets were repaired again this year. Thank you, voters!
7. Thousands of residents enjoyed two Sunday Streets events - streets without cars and open for everyone to enjoy.
8. Public Works brought the community safely through a devastating ice storm in February of 2014.
9. Recreation Services provided over 6,000 activities for the community involving over 600,000 attendees as part of our commitment to better health for all.
10. The Eugene Public Library is sending over 1,900 Eugene children, ages birth - 4, free books in the mail every month in our literacy building efforts.
11. The Finance Division and Budget Committee held 13 meetings over eight months, working in new ways to reduce the budget gap and keep our services going.
12. The City Manager's Office staff, volunteers, and partners hosted the Neighborhoods USA conference in May. This event, which included 50 workshops and 13 tours, was attended by more than 570 people from across the country and world, and brought in over \$250,000 to Eugene's economy.
13. Eighteen body cameras were in use by the Eugene Police Department. EPD is preparing a pilot project that will begin this year to collect and analyze demographic data on vehicle stops in order to ensure unbiased law enforcement and protection for every person.
14. Law Enforcement Crisis Intervention Training has expanded county wide. Eighty-three percent of our officers have been trained to respond more effectively to those having mental health crises.
15. The Envision Eugene process has resulted in a recommendation for expanding the Urban Growth Boundary to meet our 20-year land need for jobs, parks, schools, and single-family homes.

This modest 3.5% expansion is reflective of our shared values around smart growth and environmental protection.

16. This year, Love Food Not Waste, the City's commercial compost program, helped 173 participating local businesses divert over 8 million pounds of waste from the landfill to become compost. Bi-Mart is distributing the compost to 80 stores across Oregon, Washington and Idaho.
17. Eugene passed a council resolution to divest City resources from fossil fuels.
18. The Eugene City Council passed the most aggressive climate ordinance in the nation in order to ensure the ongoing implementation of our city Climate and Energy Work Plan well into the future.
19. Council banned the use of neonicotinoids on all city property, including parks, becoming perhaps the most bee friendly city in the nation.
20. Eugene purchased property that holds the Amazon Headwaters to protect important natural resources for future generations.
21. Eugene city council approved two additional rest stops to provide a safe place for homeless folks to sleep.
22. The Eugene council passed a significant sick leave ordinance, to ensure both that Eugene workers can stay home when ill without losing pay, and that we can have a healthier, safer community.

***Together with our Metro Partners we worked to strengthen our economy and help those in need:***

1. The Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network, also known as RAIN, has opened two centers and graduated its first cohorts of start-up companies, connecting the local innovation ecosystem around the University of Oregon, Oregon State University and the cities of Eugene, Springfield, Corvallis and Albany with the entrepreneurial community to create high impact, innovative, trade-sector companies that can grow and thrive in our communities.
2. Eugene and our metro partners focused our economic development efforts and created the Southern Willamette Economic Corporation, or SWEDCO.
3. Eugene joined with our metro partners in organizing the Regional Prosperity Summit II, to continue to implement strategies to focus and strengthen our local economy.
4. Eugene's affordable housing program helped create Bothy Cottage, a group home for women and children, and Stellar Apartments, a 54-unit apartment building. Construction is underway on Bascom Village that will provide an additional 101 units of high-quality affordable housing.

5. Eugene/Springfield Emergency Management teams collaborated on their first joint emergency operations plan and developed new plans for natural hazards mitigation.

Our community is more culturally diverse and interesting each year as we become home to immigrants from a number of different countries, including those from Asia and Arab nations.

Our economy is improving and unemployment decreasing – all good signs for our families.

So we can look back at 2014 with a good sense of accomplishment that was made possible by all of us working together.

**What's ahead? In 2015 we will have challenges and opportunities:**

1. We have found that our city has massive amounts of student housing - many would say we have an overbuild of this type of housing. I believe we should view this as an opportunity to repurpose some of our older housing stock for affordable units we greatly need and recover some of the older, single-unit dwellings for families. Neighborhood leaders are ready to work on this, and I ask the University of Oregon to partner with us on creative solutions.
2. What about MUPTE, the Multi Unit Property Tax Exemption? Council has heard public concern about public benefit and has been hard at work for months rewriting MUPTE criteria to ensure greater accountability, oversight, neighborhood input, labor and environmental protections. We have had helpful recommendations from our neighborhood associations and the ad-hoc MUPTE Advisory Group. I encourage the council to make good use of those recommendations in the new criteria.
3. MUPTE can be a valuable tool with great community benefit, if used in a very focused manner with involvement of the community. Expect to hear about the new version early in the new year.
4. And, what about Civic Stadium? Will the advocates succeed in raising enough dollars to save this part of our history and provide a great place for Kidsports and other recreational activity?

We'll continue to work with all interested partners to bring this effort to a successful conclusion, one that we will all take pride in for generations to come. We should know more in a couple of weeks.

5. The Farmers Market is nearing an important anniversary date in 2016, and it would be appropriate if the city and other partners could finally succeed in facilitating an indoor/outdoor year-round market for our community. I encourage and strongly support the implementation of strategies to make this long-held dream a reality.
6. EWEB and the UO Foundation are moving forward with plans for riverfront development. The city has an important role when it comes to land use, infrastructure

and a public park. I'll continue to encourage a Riverfront District emphasis that keys in on all things special about the location, as well as the economic and recreational opportunities that can and should distinguish this area from all others in our city.

7. This year, the process of constructing our new city hall will begin. The new building will be one that connects better to the street, provides a linkage between north and south, is a place of transparency and good governance, a place for the community to use and enjoy, and a place that captures the importance of both art and the outdoors in Eugene.
8. This year we move forward with Operation 365 as part of a broader human rights effort to finally address our long-standing homeless issues. This initiative will of course include more opportunities for employment, more services for those who suffer from mental illness, more treatment for those with addictions, more shelter, and more affordable housing. If Utah can do it, so can we, and we should. I am pleased to be a part of Lane County's Poverty and Homelessness Board, which is proving to be action-oriented and focused. We will take the Housing First issue to the Governor and to the legislature. We will look for funds to house people who are still dealing with addiction, and that will provide service connections. Our first effort is to house all our homeless vets through the Operation 365 project.

We thank Lane County for stepping up to provide a rest stop space and the legislative effort. This takes all of us working together.

9. During the recession, we kept all our important services going, but not at the level this community wants. We love our parks and want them sufficiently maintained. We want our rivers protected and kept clean. We want our libraries—all of them—open, and we want even more access for our families. These are some of the budget challenges we continue to have before us: how to provide the level of services that Eugene wants and deserves.
10. In addition to these important initiatives, we have to keep a strong focus on our economic development, job opportunity and retention efforts. It is through our success here that we can better fund our city needs and desires, and ensure our families are safe and secure.

I have confidence that together we can and will figure all of these things out. We will learn from our mistakes, think outside the box, be resourceful and move forward together. This is a strong, vibrant and intelligent community – a caring community. We'll keep our eyes on the triple bottom line. We'll provide excellent services and we'll keep this the place we all love. We'll take care of our home and all who live here.

I ask you to join me in expecting the best, working for the best, and getting the best.

Happy New Year!